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Georgia Manuscripts in the Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Thomas W. Henderson

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

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GEORGIA MANUSCRIPTS

IN THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

Thomas W. Henderson*

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History was created by act of the state legislature in 1902 with the charge to protect and preserve the state's threatened archives. Since that time, efforts have been made to collect not only official state records, but also important private papers and manuscripts of persons and organizations in Mississippi. As the interests and activities of these persons and organizations often have carried well beyond Mississippi's borders, some material of interest to researchers in Georgia's past may be found in the Mississippi Archives.

The archives, which has concentrated, to a degree, on collecting Civil War source material, holds thirteen manuscript collections concerning Georgia and its citizens during that period.

The Hamilton (Thomas D.) Papers [Z 448] contain pay vouchers and warrants issued by Hamilton, who served as Confederate quartermaster at Rome, Georgia, 1861-1865. Included are a "Report of persons and articles employed and hired at Rome, Ga." in July 1863, and papers concerning Thomas D. Attaway, deceased, and his father, Chesley Attaway.

In the Morrow (Robert Baxter) Papers [Z 543 f] a two-page, typed manuscript, entitled "The Percussion Shell," and dated November 24, 1914, briefly discusses the invention of the percussion shell and the Parot gun. Morrow stated that he had found one of these shells unexploded in West Point and that it probably had been fired into Fort Tyler by Union artillery.

*Mr. Henderson serves as Archivist for private manuscripts in the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

The Shingleur (Elvira Flewellen) Letters [Z 613 f] contain letters of I. A. Shingleur, from Norfolk, Virginia, and Sewells Point, Georgia, 1861-1863, to Miss Flewellen of Columbus. Also included are letters to Elvira Flewellen at Wesleyan Female College, Macon, from her sister in Wymton, Georgia. Most of the items in this collection are in poor condition, some hardly legible.

The Travis (James) Letter [Z 950 f] dated November 1, 1862, which tells of marching through Tennessee and Kentucky, was written from the Confederate "hospittle" at Ringgold.

The Moseley Family Letters [Z 545 f] contain photocopies of some interesting Civil War letters. One in particular, written to Miss Lou Moseley from M. Gamble, Augusta, July 3, 1864, mentions the military appearance of Augusta. He further related details concerning General Leonidas Polk's funeral and Bishop Elliott's address summoning the Northern Episcopal clergy to "meet him and their victims at God's judgement bar." Three other letters, from Lagrange, Augusta and Norcross, discuss family matters and local events.

In the Lauderdale (Maggie R.) Papers [Z 487 f] a letter written from Macon, December 6, 1863, discusses caring for a refugee girl from Atlanta. Another letter, dated at Columbus, May 8, 1864, mentions the killing of Mrs. Lauderdale's brother by Federal officers.

The Robertson (William and Ben) Papers [Z 861 f] comment on Confederate leadership. From Dalton, January 8, 1864, Ben Robertson wrote his sister that Jefferson Davis was disappointed over the Confederate defeat at Missionary Ridge; however, "the blame belongs to the officers combined with the fact that the enemy had four to one against us."

On June 23, 1864, from the "battlefield near Marietta," he did not believe "there is a fence, a cow, a chicken, hog or a living creature of any kind between here and Dalton. What our army don't destroy the Yankees do." He wrote several letters during July and August, 1864, from Atlanta.

The battle at Resaca is described in a letter from Allan Hargrove to his wife, Mary, written May 22, 1864,

from Allatoona, Georgia. Another letter in the Hargrove (Allan) Papers [Z 796 f] May 28, 1864, tells of the Confederate retreat from the Yankees at Atlanta.

In the Sanders (J. B.) Papers [Z 598] letters from Sanders, 37th Mississippi Volunteers, April to September, 1864, describe the retreat to, and situation in Atlanta. Sanders wrote from Resaca Station, Adairsville, Cassville, Marietta, Kennesaw Mountain, Barnesville, Atlanta, Lovejoy Station and Palmetto Station.

A rather detailed account of Union activity in Georgia is available in the Modil (George W.) Diaries [Z 535 f]. Modil, from Chesterville, Ohio, wrote his first entry in Georgia on June 4, 1864, at Sulphur Springs. Thereafter he made daily entries elaborating his activities at Rome, Kingston, Big Shanty Station and in the line of battle at Kennesaw Mountain. His diary includes weather conditions, as well as military information.

The Ferguson (Samuel W.) Papers [Z 419 f] contain a 32-page typescript, dated 1904, of Ferguson's Civil War diary. Brigadier General Ferguson served on the staff of General Pierre G. T. Beauregard at Fort Sumter and First Manassas, saw duty near Augusta and Savannah in Georgia, and in the Carolinas. Apparently the war did not consume all of his time, because many social events are recorded in this diary. Some of the more important entries were made near the end of the war: "April 12, 1865, found that the Army of Va. had surrendered. Saw the President afterwards, during the morning, in consultation with Genls [D. H.] Cooper, [J. E.] Johnston and Beauregard. Was put in command of all the cavalry on this line..." On May 4 he had an interview with "the President and Genl Duke...." Included in the diary is a list of officers and men honorably discharged near Washington, Georgia, May 6, 1865. Later, after rereading his journal, Ferguson wrote that he could never understand why he was sent to Georgia, because there his brigade stood idle from January until late April, 1865.

The Smith (Thomas Tristram) Manuscript [Z 226 f] is a copy of a typescript, dated 1899, relating the author's experiences in the Civil War. Following service in Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi, he joined General Joseph E. Johnston's army at Resaca, Georgia, May 11, 1864. Smith fought at Kingston, New Hope Church, Pine Mountain,

Kennesaw Mountain, Chattahoochee River, Peachtree Creek and the siege of Atlanta. In October, 1864, he was sent to Big Shanty Station to help destroy the railroad and afterwards participated in the Tennessee campaign.

A final Civil War item is the First Arkansas Mounted Rifles History by Robert H. Dacus [Z 833 f]. The unit saw duty in Georgia after it joined Johnston's army in April, 1864. It fought at Rockface Mountain, Dalton, Resaca, Dallas, Lost Mountain, New Hope Church, Kennesaw Mountain and Atlanta. The history includes a roster of the soldiers.

Other collections in the Mississippi Archives concerning Georgia include the Oliver (James Shelton) Papers [Z 551 f]. A native Georgian, Oliver was commissioned on September 26, 1836, as First Lieutenant of the 193rd District of Militia. Two letters from C. H. White in Ruckersville, Georgia, to Mrs. Oliver in Mississippi, relate local events and family matters in Ruckersville.

The Davis (Jefferson) Letters [Z 785 f] contain copies and typescripts of five letters, 1881-1883, from Davis to Benjamin Milner Blackburn, editor of the Madison Madisonian. Davis praised Blackburn for defending the South and himself (Davis), and apologized for not being able to attend Blackburn's wedding.

The Wailes-Covington Family Papers [Z 959] include three letters from Aquasca Mills, Georgia, written between 1797 and 1799. All three contain information about family and local matters.

The Welch (Jacob P.) Autobiography [Z 274 m] concerns the Welch family, which migrated from Virginia to Burke County, Georgia, before the American Revolution. Dempsey Welch and his sons worked as brickmasons in Augusta. Jacob, son of Dempsey, lived on "Bever Dam Creek," near Waynesboro. Warren Welch, son of Jacob and father of Jacob P. Welch, born 1780 in Burke County, was at one time a musician and an actor in Savannah, and later served in the War of 1812. He lived in Morgan County on Hard Labor Creek. Soon after Jacob Perry Welch was born, his family moved, first to Turkey Creek in Laurence County, and then to a plantation near Irvington in Wilkinson County. The family lived in Monticello, Jasper County, before moving to Mississippi around 1815.

The Simms (Richard) Manuscript [Z 1103 f] is an undated letter, addressed "Mr. Pres," concerning the Black suffrage amendments after the Civil War, and believed to have been written by Richard Simms of Bainbridge County, Georgia.

Two items describe trips across antebellum Georgia. In the Bonsall (Sermon) Letter [Z 1147 f] Bonsall wrote in October, 1835, about his family's trip from Barnwell, South Carolina, to Raymond, Mississippi. On October 12, 1835, they crossed the Savannah River at Moses Ferry. In Waynesboro they saw good crops, and at the "very old looking" village of Louisville, Bonsall noted the worn plantations and the excitement over the upcoming gubernatorial election. After crossing the Oconee River, the group went through Milledgeville, Scottsboro, and Macon, crossed the Flint River at a "new village" called Knoxville and then proceeded to Columbus.

A typewritten copy of the journal of John Gullage describing a trip from Society Hill, South Carolina, to Raleigh, Mississippi, in 1847 is included in the Gullage (John) Papers [Z 980 f]. The author mentions the purchase of fodder, food, and supplies in Augusta, and paying "87 1/2 cents for 1 waggon whip" in Sparta. He crossed the Oconee River and traveled to Columbus on a route similar to that of Sermon Bonsall. This collection is restricted.

Among collections from the twentieth century is the Goins (Craddock) Papers [Z 1003 and Z 1003.1]. Craddock Goins, a native of Atlanta, worked for the Atlanta Constitution and newspapers in Memphis, St. Louis, Chicago, Milwaukee and Jackson. He came to Mississippi about 1926, then went to New York and Washington, before returning to Atlanta around 1962. This collection includes papers, correspondence and manuscripts written in various periods of Goins's career.

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History is located in the new Archives and History Building on the Capitol Green at 100 South State Street, Jackson, Mississippi. The library and search rooms are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 A.M. until 4:30 P.M., from 8:30 A.M. to noon on Saturdays, and until 9:00 P.M. on Monday evenings. Inquiries concerning the material in this Department should be addressed to the Director, Archives

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and Library Division, Mississippi Department of Archives
and History, P. O. Box 571, Jackson, Mississippi 39205.